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ABSTRACT

While its educational policy is still in a period of transition, China in 1983 is more politically moderate, with a longer projected educational program for the masses than at any time since 1949. It is providing more experiential and relevant curricula from preschool through the senior middle school, with increased facilities and financing. While trying to regain the balance between quality and equalitarianism of pre-Cultural Revolution days, the system is also attempting to meet the government's goal of "the Four Modernizations" by preparing youth morally, intellectually, and physically for the 21st century. The current educational stress on length of schooling, key schools for the gifted, examinations, and academic curricula is closely related to the country's potential as a world economic and political superpower. (LP)

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"1983 Pedagogy in the Peoples' Republic of China: A Comparative Model"

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1983 Pedagogy in the Peoples' Republic of China: A Comparative Model

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This paper represents a study of pedagogy in the Peoples' Republic of China to determine at what point in modern history has the 1983 system of education positioned itself and how can this present position be compared with the former system from the beginning of "New China" in 1949.

Since the 1950's, Chinese education has vacilated between two ideals, each requiring a different educational model. One ideal represents those followers who stress that the educational system must provide qualified personnel to fuel the country's rapid economic development. The academic model that reflects this ideal is marked by a hierarchical educational structure. Those students who show the most promise of becoming qualified leaders are chosen early in their academic career and put on a fast track. After elementary school, they are placed in the elite or key secondary schools which in turn leads to direct entrance to a prominent university. Most of these individuals were students who came from intellectual homes.

The other ideal represents those people who expect the educational system to do more than provide personnel to facilitate China's economic development. The goals of this group are ideopolitical, as well as economic. This belief states that schools should produce laborers with a socialist consciousness who are concerned with a continuing evolution of a revolutionary socialist state. This ideology requires a more revolutionary academic model. Educational opportunities should be redistributed in order to accommodate the formerly deprived classes. There is a constant monitoring of this system by officials to insure that existing inequalities are gradually reduced. Of course, those who benefit the most from this ideal are the workers and the peasant families.

Elements from both these models have been present in the Chinese educational system since 1949. Certain periods during this time have emphasized one or the other of the models. For example, during the "Great Leap Forward" period in 1958-1959 educational opportunities expanded so that children of workers, peasants, and party officials could be accommodated in secondary schools and universities. In 1960, this trend was reversed, and the emphasis was placed on a tightening of academic standards in order to restore and assure the quality of education. The Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, once again reversed the preceeding trend, and there was a push toward an expansion of educational opportunities.

Both models have continually treated primary education as a basic necessity for all people. Therefore, it has been the secondary middle school and university education that has been most affected by these opposing ideologies and the fluctuating between the two.

The Chinese educational policy still remains in transition. The trend since the Cultural Revolution is toward the academic quality model. The legacy of the Cultural Revolution is still influential. Even though it is considered a catastrophe and current policy has completely reversed the Cultural Revolution policies, a restoration of pre-Cultural Revolution conditions is taking longer than anticipated. The qualities of quantity and equalitarianism have been replaced by a stress of quality and a hierarchy. The current goal is to restore the balance that existed in 1965 before the Cultural Revolution and to expand the college and post graduate educational system. This has meant a return of the key schools at every level from primary to university. This goal has also meant a return of the options for graduating middle school students. China is still striving to accomplish this goal.

The 12th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1982, designated three strategic areas for economic construction: 1) agriculture, 2) energy and transportation, and 3) education and science. At present, the education area

remains the weakest link. Deng Xiaoping stated recently that a more knowledgeable populace is the key to success of four modernizations. Developing intellectual resources should be one of the main investments. The government has studied the problem and is adopting various measures to speed up educational developments. During the present sixth five year plan, approximately 67% more funding has been available to the educational institutions throughout China.

As mentioned before, primary schooling is considered basic education. Currently 96% of the school age children enter a primary school. However, only 65% of these children complete the full five year course. Rural schools have a higher dropout rate than the urban areas. There are a variety of reasons why students dropout of primary school, including: 1) some cannot keep up with the work; 2) some have family problems; 3) some live too far to walk to the nearest school; 4) and in many rural areas the teachers are often unqualified or inferior. In 1980 a joint decision by the Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council set 1985 as a target date for universal primary education in those districts that are relatively well developed economically and educationally. For less developed districts, the target date is 1990. Some flexible measures are necessary to meet the cultural knowledge needs of the peasants. Some of the primary schools will offer all the courses designated by the Ministry of Education. Some primary schools will offer an abbreviated curriculum consisting of courses in the Chinese language, arithmetic, and ideological education. Some schools will offer classes for half days, some will offer classes every other day according to the local environment and needs of the people. This joint decision has also developed some conditions designed to encourage trained teachers to go back to the countryside.

Nursery schools and kindergartens include children from the ages 3 to 6. The emphasis in the curriculum for these primary schools is on the need for a well-rounded education that includes physical, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic

training so that when the child enters elementary school s/he will have a good foundation for healthy, active growth both mentally and physically. In these primary schools it is stressed to the teachers that teaching needs to take full account of the childrens' age characteristics. The content of the primary education curriculum is divided into eight segments, 1) living and health habits, 2) physical activity, 3) ethical values, 4) language, 5) general knowledge, 6) arithmetic, 7) music, and 8) art. The first priority is given to physical education due to the fact that children are growing rapidly at this age and they need exercise and good nutrition to improve the physical fitness and coordination of the primary student. There is also an emphasis being placed more on an appreciation for beauty and aesthetics. The kindergarten curriculum includes music, dancing, drawing, and literature which teach rudimentary basics and skills in these fields.

The primary school consists of grades 1-5. The emphasis continues to be on the development of the whole child; and the evaluation for graduation from elementary school takes into account the academic grades, the ethical character of the child and the condition of physical health. New national textbooks have been adopted to replace the materials edited during the Cultural Revolution. Academic subjects include Chinese language, arithmetic, science, as well as various other topics depending again on the location of the school. Courses in ethical values have been added to the curriculum. Students are required to have physical exercise for at least one hour per day. They also must do eye exercises daily which are designed to prevent nearsightedness.

The adoption by the state of a production responsiblity system for citizens has created some problems for the primary schools in relation to the teachers and their responsibilities. Before this system, teachers were paid by being given work points, then they shared in the common profits of the community at the end

of the year. Now, after the adoption of this production responsiblity system, teachers are also allocated a plot of land for which they are responsible, as well as having to teach. The produce from the land must be part of the community profits. Therefore, teachers are finding themselves with two jobs. Various provinces are trying to deal with this problem. One province has developed a renumeration system where a monthly wage is determined for teachers, and they receive their wages at the end of the year when the brigade profits are distributed. As can be imagined, students are also affected by this production responsibility system. Not only is the quality of education likely to suffer from the teachers' side, but if it appears unlikely that a student will go to a university, then it will be more profitable for him/her and this family if he/she is out of school and goes to work in the fields or factories. The state and provinces are trying to deal with this problem.

In the past three years there has been a great deal of structual change in the junior and senior middle school system. There are two basic functions that the middle schools must perform: 1) provide the most outstanding students (4% to 6%) with a university preparatory foundation, or 2) provide training and/or job skills for the rest of the students which is the majority. The state is trying to strengthen the junior middle school education in order to provide a good basic education for all citizens. The junior middle school classes might include, along with the basic academic courses, some youth training, a general understanding of the law, a brief history of school development, and an education in ethical values and the philosophy of life. These schools try to provide for all students no matter if they will go to the university or into some vocational training. There has been a recent push to control the tendency toward the blind development of senior middle schools, despite the need to provide for numbers of students. There is a need for more vocational training courses as

opposed to university preparatory. Many of the current senior middle schools have been converted to vocational training or have been closed. One of the problems is the quality of the teachers at this level. In order to assure a quality education to as many as possible the state has seen a need to divide the middle schools into two types at both the junior and senior levels. One type is called key schools. This idea was in effect before the Cultural Revolution, and is considered a necessary evil for the present. The function of a key school is to produce students for higher education. Only a small percentage of schools are considered key schools. There are 5,000 out of 106,718 middle schools and only 700 of these 5,000 are considered first rate key schools. These few schools provide 60% to 70% of all students in the universities. The nation's resources are concentrated in these key schools which have the best students and teachers. There are not enough resources to distribute quality to all middle schools, hence the decision to concentrate in a few and attempt to find some alternative education for others. The other type of middle school is where the transformations are occurring. More vocational training is necessary and if a student is not chosen for university study then the state is encouraging job and skill training. More of these vocational schools are being founded with the expressed desire to train as many people as possible to meet certain needs of China's construction and modernization. These schools are expected to account for over 40% of the total senior middle school enrollment by 1987. One major problem that has arisen is that from the people's vantage point, the attitude of the country still regards a quality education as one which ends in a college degree. One reason may be that the government provides jobs for people with a college degree and does not provide for people with a vocational degree. Therefore, some students will wait to get into a college program instead of going into a vocational program. The enrollment in the middle schools

which provide vocational training has not grown recently. The peasants regard agricultural training schools as second class so they will pull their children out of secondary school to work on the farms if there is no chance for that student to pursue a college education. To combat some of these problems the state is encouraging the middle schools in the countryside to become more specialized in agriculture in order to meet the needs of students in the rural areas. The government has also asked companies and businesses to encourage and promote the completion of the education and training of all the workers who didn't receive the basic junior middle school education by 1985. This completion of education will hopefully promote productivity. Those workers who have the basic junior middle school education will be encouraged to pursue the senior middle school degree as will senior middle school degrees be encouraged to continue to the college level. At the present 70% of the enterprises and departments have set-up worker's schools. Virtually tens of millions of workers are receiving scientific and cultural training.

Middle schools are considered non-resident. The students go to school for six hours per day, six days per week. Most of this time is devoted to study, but one hour per day is assigned to be used for pursuing hobbies, sports, or scientific research.

A five year plan for higher education was developed by the Ministry of Education and the State Planning Commission in 1982. This program provides for the following:

1. The number of college students will increase by 121,000 students each year, reaching a total of 1.76 million college students by 1987. This increase means a 43% rise over the 1982 figure of 1.153 million (presently 11 out of every 10,000 people in China are enrolled in college). Since the liberation, 3.54 million people have graduated from institutes of higher learning.

2. The annual enrollment of regular colleges will rise to 550,000 in 1987. This is an increase of 75% over the 1982 figure of 315 000.
3. A more rapid development of alternative forms of higher learning is expected. These forms include radio and television classes, correspondence schools, night schools, enterprise run workers' colleges, peasants' colleges, colleges for managerial cadres, and teachers' training. The annual enrollment for these forms is expected to increase from 290,000 in 1982 to 1.1 million in 1987. The total number of students is predicted to rise from 640,000 in 1982 to 2.37 million in 1987.
4. There will be concrete measures taken to facilitate expansion of higher learning. A number of new colleges have already been set up, many of them staffed by faculty available from existing universities. By the end of 1982 full time universities and colleges had increased from 205 in 1949 to 598 in 1978 to more than 700 today. There is an enrollment of 1.35 million students in these institutes. These are the centers for teaching and scientific research with a total full time teaching staff of 250,000. There are 4,231 full professors, 20,000 associate professors, and 118,000 lecturers included in this staff. Other measures to facilitate expansion include the workers' colleges run by large and medium sized cities, large enterprises and peoples' organizations. These operations now have about 490,000 students. Educational television stations will be launched in every city with a population over 1 million. These stations will offer courses in economics, finance, law, and applied liberal arts. There has been an enrollment of 800,000 in the past three years. Another measure taken will be converting the students who live in the same city as their college to non-resident students and if they choose to live on campus, charging for board. In addition, the Ministry

of Education and State Planning Commission have encouraged localities to develop whatever form of higher education is most feasible given the local economic conditions.

The main function of most universities undergraduate courses is to provide a good foundation, while at the same time giving essential professional training to the students. There is more emphasis given to strengthening and broadening the students foundation in order to provide adaptability to a wide range of jobs. There have been some changes in the teaching methods at the institutes for higher education. The specialized professional courses have been greatly expanded while the basic courses have been strengthened. Many elective courses have been added and these now consitute not less than 20% of the course load required. The hands-on training technique has been encouraged. These measures have been designed to help students respond better to the many sided needs of a nation and give them a foundation for further development as advanced specialists. China has always recognized the great importance of research activities and educational theories. There is still a tremendous appeal for John Dewey's theories.

China does offer graduate programs at several universities. Recently, there are some 10,000 students in graduate studies throughout China with about 22% pursuing a masters degree. In 1982 there were 902 Chinese students enrolled in doctoral degree programs. This small number indicates the limited number of students who are adequately trained to pursue this advanced degree. The requirement for a doctoral degree program stipulates applicants must be:

1. Familiar with the basic principles of Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought and serve socialism.
2. Working persons with a master's degree, about to receive a master's degree, or with equivalent scholastic ability.
3. In good health and generally under 40 years of age.
4. Recommended by two assistant professors or higher learning specialists in the applicants field.

The government must spend a great deal of money to promote higher education. Between 1981 and 1985 700 million yuan will be spend just to upgrade the laboratory facilities at key universities. It costs the state 8,000 to 10,000 yuan per regular resident student from admittance to graduation. The tuition for community, non-resident students is 400 to 800 yuan. The state pays for the various forms of higher education.

There have been some other important changes in college enrollment besides increasing numbers. Colleges of agriculture, forestry, medicine, and teaching have lowered their admission requirements for applicants from rural areas who agree to return to these areas to work upon graduation. In order to provide more educational staff for small and collectively owned enterprises, colleges have been encouraged to sign personnel training contracts with the employer units. An increasing number of middle schools are supplying more information on applicants, allowing the colleges to be more flexible in whom they admit. Disabled youth are now being given greater enrollment possibilities.

A number of pitfalls still remain in the Chinese education system. In the rush to restore quality education, the state ignored some of the other functions of an education system, like socialization of students. Surveys show that current students are uninterested in politics and skeptical about the advantages of Marxism and Socialism. They tend to be primarily interested in their personal goals. The education system is in danger of developing two tiers which is potentially explosive to the system. One tier consists of a small group of successful students who are admitted to the best middle schools and universities. The other tier is the vast majority who are unable to perform at an equivalent level. Lastly, success of current programs at all educational levels is intimately tied to a reform of the employment system. As long as a university degree entitles a student to a guaranteed stable job, while the absence of such a degree makes suitable employment hard to find, problems will arise. One hopeful development will be that as China's economy increases in the world community, the

educational system will be the one institution that will immediately benefit because the two systems have become parallel and interdependent. If China can quadruple the GNP by 1999, it could become the next world industrial power. This may well depend upon four educational developments that are in place or researched in this paper and selectively seen in China this year in Guangxi Autonomous Region by this writer who has lectured to China's teacher educators from ten provinces at the Guangxi Institute of Nationalities in Nanning, Guangxi. These pedagogical developments are as follows:

1. China's school system is in session 6 days a week for 8 hours a day. Homework is assigned for two hours per day and students are expected to complete it. Classes are held eleven months out of each year. This is approximately double the amount of time given to general studies in the public schools in most countries including the United States.
2. Key schools attempt to furnish the best students with the best facilities and the most qualified teachers. Most provinces have only one major key middle school but several key primary schools. The middle school serves as a province wide institution and usually has required board and room for students. Key primary schools usually are near the work-place of the most qualified professionals and/or workers in the province.
3. The examination process is used to filter students and track abilities into areas of need and quality. Serious examinations begin in the fifth grade when students are eligible to be promoted to the middle schools. Also, every year thereafter, examinations are given for annual promotion. Special national examinations are given at the end of eleventh grade to determine eligibility for college and university entrance.
4. Concentration on science, math and foreign languages in the schools in the PRC is heavy and on the increase. Students begin these studies when they enter school at age seven, and they are part of the regular

curriculum for the greater portion of all eleven grades of primary and middle school. Most students in China take a minimum of two years of English. Japanese, Russian, and French are available at most schools.

This paper concludes that China in 1983 is more politically moderate with a longer projected educational program for the masses. It is providing more experiential and relevant curricula from preschool through the senior middle school with increased facilities and financing. All this has limited relationships to the pre-cultural revolution days, and goes beyond any educational attempt in the past to prepare youth morally, intellectually and physically for the 21st. Century. Their current stress on length of schooling, key schools, examinations and academic curricula is closely related to their potential economic and political achievements as a world superpower!

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Table I: No. of Schools

	1949	1957	1965	1978	1982
Institutes of higher learning	205	229	434	598	715
Secondary schools	5,216	12,474	80,993	165,105	107,892
Primary schools	346,800	547,300	1,681,900	949,300	880,516
Schools for the deaf and mute	**	66	266	292	312
Kindergartens	**	16,400	19,200	164,000	122,107

Table II: No. of Students at Schools

(in thousands)

	1949	1957	1965	1978	1982
Institutes of higher learning	117	441	674	856	1,154
Secondary schools	1,268	7,081	14,318	66,372	47,028
Primary schools	24,391	64,283	116,209	146,240	139,720
Schools for the deaf and mute	**	7.5	22.9	30.9	33.7
Kindergartens	**	1,088	1,713	7,877	11,131

Table III: No. of Graduates

(in millions)

	1949-65	1966-76	1977-80	1981-82
Institutes of higher learning	1.554	1.033	0.591	0.60
Secondary schools	23.891	106.151	80.693	31.106
Primary schools	69.997	165.20	90.03	41.447

Table IV: No. of Teachers

(in thousands)

	1949	1957	1965	1978	1982
Institutes of higher learning	16	70	138	206	287
Secondary schools	83	293	709	3.281	2.871
Primary schools	836	1.884	3.857	5.226	5.505
Schools for the deaf and mute	**	0.7	2.6	4.2	5.4
Kindergartens	**	50	62	277	415

** No figures available.

Table V. Status of Regular Institutes of Higher Learning in 1982

	No. of schools	No. of graduates	New enrolment	No. of students
Total	715	454,814	311,820	1,133,494
Universities	32	51,827	35,239	125,200
Polytechnic institutes	206	183,830	106,388	405,619
Agricultural institutes	56	36,720	19,963	70,182
Institutes of forestry	10	4,031	2,280	7,986
Medical universities	112	25,964	29,314	161,869
Teachers' institutes	194	125,444	94,878	281,828
Language institutes	10	4,398	2,847	11,431
Institutes of finance and economics	36	9,207	11,267	37,247
Institutes of political science and law	9	920	2,595	9,225
Institutes of physical culture	13	4,904	2,383	8,349
Art institutes	27	2,951	1,731	4,957
Institutes for nationalities	10	4,618	2,935	9,601

Table VI. No. of Adults at Schools

(in thousands)

	1981	1982
Institutes of higher learning	536	644
Radio and TV universities	170	258
Workers' and peasants' colleges	100	144
Correspondence and evening universities	241	208
Teachers' colleges	25	34
Secondary schools	8,207	10,804
Primary schools	9,736	7,566

Table VII. Educational Levels Attained (per 100,000)

	Institute of higher learning	Senior middle school	Junior middle school	Primary school
1964	416	1,319	4,680	28,330
1982	599	6,622	17,758	35,377

The People's Republic of China